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BRITISH WEST AFRICA[1].

By Consul W. J. Yerby, Dakar, Senegal, French West Africa.

According to official statistics of the British West African colonies, imports from the United States to Nigeria, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia were valued at $3,386,410 in 1914, as against $3,032,737 in 1913, $2,753,525 in 1912, and $1,771,265 in 1911. The exports from these colonies to the United States were valued at $491,724 in 1914, as against $491,633 in 1913, $350,950 in 1912, and $209,013 in 1911, each year shipments consisted mainly of mahogany from the Gold Coast. These figures, however, do not represent the total value of the trade with the United States, owing principally to the fact that in the customs returns the country of transshipment is generally given as the country of origin or final destination, especially where through bills of lading are not given, and American exporters and importers sell and buy through agents or brokers in Liverpool, Hamburg, Antwerp, etc.

Principal Articles Imported from the United States.

The following table shows the value of the principal articles imported into the British West African colonies from the United States in 1912, 1913, and 1914:

Articles.	1912	1913	1914
NIGERIA.			
Carriages and wagons	$1,400	$552	$827
Cement	7,570	.....	.....
Coopers' stores	44,594	43,947	34,588
Flour	78,995	65,991	31,230
Hardware	36,000	6,183	4,608
Implements and tools	989	2,609	905
Kerosene	167,351	365,134	285,036
Launches	1,194	.....	.....
Lumber	17,519	21,484	10,228
Machinery, agricultural and mining	6,300	139	691
Motor cars and trucks	1,099	989	2,282
Provisions, n. e. s.	13,642	24,407	3,289
Spirits	842	1,591	535
Sewing machines	4,110	9,589	1,080
Tobacco:			
Leaf	894,537	816,977	584,144
Cigarettes	10,518	5	.....
All other articles	168,505	177,132	787,790
Total	1,455,165	1,476,729	1,747,233

Articles.	1912	1913	1914
GOLD COAST.			
Beef and pork	$13,632	$3,177	$7,367
Building material	16,215	190	10
Carriages and carts	5,016	15,116	26,685
Flour	257,110	339,178	272,719
Kerosene	128,801	115,534	134,867
Lumber	55,480	58,623	31,872
Machinery, agricultural and mining	21,460	25,760	39,468
Provisions, n. e. s.	14,736	20,088	62,591
Rum	416,668	389,915	375,864
Tobacco, leaf	153,685	179,523	203,861
All other articles	34,220	77,621	159,342
Total	1,117,023	1,221,725	1,314,676
SIERRA LEONE.			
Biscuits and bread	336	993	68
Cotton piece goods	219	633	360
Flour	5,634	22,997	19,328
Kerosene	41,237	61,051	37,760
Launches	3,522	.....	.....
Lumber	21,440	53,525	86,999
Medicines and drugs	992	2,019	2,540

[1] The present report supplements the report from British West Africa published in supplement to COMMERCE REPORTS No. 67a, dated Oct. 11, 1915.

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Articles.	1912	1913	1914	Articles.	1912	1913	1914
SIERRA LEONE—con.				GAMBIA.			
Sewing machines...	$1,090	$1,022	$457	Hardware.....	$29	.....	$39
Tobacco leaf.....	57,202	108,110	146,092	Spirits.....	1,416	.....	209
All other articles...	6,908	12,628	12,436	Tobacco.....	38,312	$68,305	18,213
Total.....	141,580	262,978	306,040	Total.....	39,757	68,305	18,461

The principal goods included in the item "All other articles" imported were as follows: Nigeria—bread and biscuits, salt, coal, apparel, medicines, paints, clocks and watches, sugar, scientific instruments, earthenware, glassware, furniture, steel manufactures, galvanized-iron sheets, corrugated-iron roofing, iron pots, nails, screws, cotton goods, bags and sacks, and leather manufactures; Gold Coast—brass and copper ware, bread and biscuits, coal, cotton goods, earthenware, furniture, perfumery, soap, sugar, and manufactured tobacco; Sierra Leone—apparel, boots and shoes, coal, cutlery, furniture, hardware, perfumery, soap, sugar, provisions, and lanterns.

SIERRA LEONE.

The conclusion to be drawn from a review of trade in Sierra Leone during 1914 is that in the early part of the year there were indications of reaction from the prosperous years which preceded it, and although as time progressed the effect was not so very marked or the diminution in trade so rapid, the decline was nevertheless appreciable. With the outbreak of war the depression became more acute. It is observed that the advent of war was not the determining factor in the shrinkage in the value of trade, as other influences were at work. These, briefly summarized, were as follows: (1) The decline in the prices of the domestic produce; (2) the accumulation of imported merchandise and the restriction of fresh business in consequence of their slow liquidation; (3) the loss of trade with Germany and other European countries.

Although there were indications of a decline in trade during the first half of the year, especially in the quantity and value of the colony's exports, due to the decreased prices in Europe for its principal products—palm kernels and ginger—there remained evidences of general prosperity. Trade in Sierra Leone, like that in all other West African colonies, depends on the demands in European markets for its raw products, evidenced by the local prices offered for them. When prices are good the natives harvest much of their export products; when poor, less. Therefore, as prices for the country's products were poor during the first half of the year, and dropped lower when the war broke out, the export trade, which means practically everything in Sierra Leone, suffered as a consequence.

Agriculture—Cultivation of Ginger and Rice.

Aside from the cultivation of ginger for export there is no agricultural work done in Sierra Leone other than the cultivation of rice and garden products for home consumption. There was a notable decrease in the production of ginger in 1913, but during 1914 there was a further decrease of over 40 per cent, due entirely to the

depression in prices in the European markets. In 1910 the average price per hundredweight was $9.98, since when it has fallen steadily until the present year, when an average price of only $4.90 was paid. Fortunately the root does not spoil if left in the ground for one or even two years, so that when prices are low the natives are able to wait for higher quotations. The greater part of the ginger is shipped through Liverpool to the United States.

As a result of delays and irregularities in the rainfall, a very moderate crop of rice was harvested, which accounts for the diminution in the quantity exported; the increase in value was caused by a shortage in the supply, which was unequal to the demand.

The native prefers the domestic rice to any of the imported kinds. It is considered to possess greater nutritive properties, and in consequence commands a higher price. Imported rice is only resorted to when there is scarcity of the local product.

Trade in Piassava and Kola Nuts—Cattle Raising—Small Industries.

Piassava and palms grow without cultivation, the harvests depending entirely on the demands. There was a gratifying increase in the quantity of piassava shipped, which is not surprising in view of the extraordinary prices quoted for this product in the British market. The average price in 1913 was $112 a ton, while in December, 1914, $287 was offered—a very strong inducement for the piassava traders to export every obtainable bundle of fiber. The piassava trade of the colony is almost entirely carried on in the Sherbro district. Kola nuts also grow without cultivation, and are very valuable. Practically all of them are shipped to Gambia and Senegal. The local price, in Freetown, averages about $40 per measure of 160 pounds. The native Christian women had all of this trade until just a few years ago, when petty Syrian traders secured it.

Cattle are raised in the far interior, but it appears that most of these are brought across the frontier from French Guinea.

There are no mines and no manufactures, except the native shops of shoe cobblers, tailors, goldsmiths, cabinetmakers, and workers on leather trinkets, baskets, hammocks, etc. Some native cotton cloth is also made.

The Foreign Trade of the Colony.

The total value of all imports, excluding specie and Government stores, into Sierra Leone in 1914 was $4,718,224, compared with $6,286,784 in 1913 and $5,570,465 in 1912; imports of specie amounted to $1,161,261, as against $1,519,496 and $999,773, and of Government stores to $957,483, as against $710,694 and $363,150, respectively. Of the $4,718,224 worth of general merchandise received in 1914, $3,468,671 worth was supplied by the United Kingdom; which country also furnished the bulk of the goods in 1913, $4,412,373 worth.

Exports of Sierra Leone products and of foreign goods in 1914 amounted in value to $5,069,919, as against $7,251,740 in 1913 and $6,569,970 in 1912; while shipments of specie were valued at $1,014,906, $1,172,532, and $927,373, respectively. In 1914 the greater part of the exports and reexports went to the United Kingdom, $1,611,595 worth; but in the preceding year the bulk of the trade was with Germany, $4,001,017, the United Kingdom taking only $1,068,576 worth.

Distribution of Imports and Exports.

In the following table is shown the value of Sierra Leone's imports and exports, including reexports, of general merchandise (excluding specie and Government stores) by countries in 1913 and 1914:

Countries.	Imports from.		Exports and reexports to.	
	1913	1914	1913	1914
United Kingdom	$4,412,373	$3,468,671	$1,068,576	$1,611,595
British West African possessions	68,696	51,804	523,528	403,248
France	88,273	85,685	973	8,249
Germany	814,049	450,322	4,001,017	1,523,954
Netherlands	435,965	231,319	.....	.....
United States	263,059	305,451	.....	.....
Foreign West African possessions	80,930	55,016	1,169,279	1,069,316
All other countries	123,539	69,956	550	4,083
Not specified	.....	.....	487,817	449,474
Total	6,286,784	4,718,224	7,251,740	5,069,919

Imports by Articles.

In the following table is shown the value of the principal articles imported from all countries into Sierra Leone during 1912, 1913, and 1914:

Articles.	1912	1913	1914	Articles.	1912	1913	1914
Beads	$64,542	$55,356	$39,006	Mineral oil: Kerosene	$73,297	$83,788	$62,528
Boots and shoes	42,110	52,290	42,753	Perfumery and toilet preparations	63,623	84,990	55,589
Butter (canned)	30,359	39,483	28,996	Provisions, n. e. s.	264,720	366,711	112,667
Cement	26,476	27,449	37,945	Rice	67,511	42,140	35,926
Coal and patent fuel	307,181	237,724	331,253	Salt	86,537	91,471	81,199
Corrugated iron sheets	26,500	33,318	36,106	Soap	31,274	39,809	41,152
Cotton, manufactures of:				Spirits:			
Piece goods	1,126,795	1,299,655	900,560	Geneva	296,393	273,659	123,061
Knit goods	215,437	223,602	191,146	Rum	81,729	76,674	40,344
Other	514,602	544,953	377,422	Other	62,801	79,466	53,190
Cutlery	30,948	29,449	19,094	Sugar	60,051	58,450	61,910
Earthenware	30,378	37,507	31,965	Tobacco:			
Flour	110,570	113,918	113,358	Manufactured	40,412	59,346	27,945
Furniture	36,505	35,687	27,761	Unmanufactured	301,643	306,952	276,510
Haberdashery	16,836	20,573	17,819	Umbrellas	29,298	32,987	30,500
Hardware	61,618	68,163	36,378	Woolen goods	67,920	97,237	105,179
Hats and caps	80,620	98,356	69,341	All other articles	967,364	1,231,793	969,829
Iron goods, n. e. s.	134,647	212,912	130,170				
Iron pots	42,753	34,719	21,328				
Jewelry	24,714	35,566	9,503	Total	5,570,465	6,286,784	4,718,224
Lumber	104,147	108,779	130,861	Government stores	363,150	710,694	957,483
Machines, sewing	16,802	8,841	16,977	Specie	999,773	1,519,496	1,161,261
Medicines and drugs	31,352	43,011	30,953	Grand total	6,933,388	8,516,974	6,836,968

Values are based upon the declarations of importers as goods lie in the port of entry, such values being the invoice values, excluding trade discounts, but including cash and other discounts, freight, insurance, and value of packages containing goods—c. i. f.

Principal Articles in Demand.

There is in Sierra Leone, as in all West Africa, a growing demand for such imported foodstuffs as flour, biscuits in barrels and tins, salt beef and pork, cured fish, canned butter, sweetened and unsweetened condensed or evaporated milk, and refined and unrefined sugar. Other articles of general merchandise for which there is a market are: Cotton goods of plain and fancy patterns in pieces of 3, 6,

and 8 yards, shirtings, cotton underwear (especially undershirts), hats and caps, helmets and umbrellas, fancy haberdashery, shoes (black, tan, and canvas), headkerchiefs and handkerchiefs, ready-made light summer clothes (for men, women, and children), furniture, building material (corrugated iron roofing, cement, lumber, nails, etc.), leaf tobacco and cheap cigarettes in cans, lamps, lanterns, tools, hardware, crockery, glassware, cheap watches and clocks, kerosene, candles, aerated and mineral waters, ale and porter, bags or sacks for palm nuts and ginger, cooper's stores, matches, rope and cordage, hand agricultural implements, door knobs and locks, and padlocks. Though the market is not very active at present, as soon as the war is over the demands for the above articles will rapidly increase.

Exports by Articles.

In the following table is shown the value of the principal articles exported from Sierra Leone during 1912 ,1913, and 1914:

Articles.	1912	1913	1914	Articles.	1912	1913	1914
Ginger	$218,308	$172,587	$76,099	Rubber	$14,447	$6,287	$1,771
Gum copal	7,820	13,050	14,963	All other articles	54,864	53,711	39,562
Hides	19,664	20,675	23,269				
Kola nuts	1,345,595	1,596,063	1,358,582	Total	5,950,888	6,698,549	4,541,846
Palm kernels	3,859,604	4,481,304	2,721,617	Reexports	619,082	553,191	528,073
Palm oil	327,549	275,703	187,521	Specie	927,373	1,172,532	1,014,906
Piassava	75,238	59,754	94,848				
Rice, African	27,799	19,415	23,624	Grand total	7,497,343	8,424,272	6,084,825

For statistical purposes exports (except specie) are valued as they lie in the port of shipment, such value including cost of packages in which they are contained and all charges incidental to placing them on board the exporting vessel, but exclusive of conveyance to port of destination. In other words, the values of exports are given f. o. b. The value of specie is the face or currency value.

Shipping Movements.

The total number of vessels entering the ports of the Colony during 1914 was 899, with a tonnage of 1,398,708, as against 993, with a tonnage of 1,463,602 in 1913; but of those entering in 1914, 28, with a tonnage of 5,851, were in ballast, as against 122 with a tonnage of 1,857 in 1913. No American ships entered during the year.

Outlook for 1915—Improvement in Palm-Kernel Trade.

To speak of the future is more difficult than usual in view of the abnormal conditions prevailing throughout the world. During the last two months of 1914, the value of the trade in exports of domestic produce, which had shrunk consideraly after the outbreak of war, showed signs of improvement, due to the completion of arrangements in the United Kingdom for the utilization of the palm kernels of West Africa (the great bulk of which had formerly gone to Germany), by erecting mills and adapting existing machinery to cope with the manufacture of the commodities obtainable therefrom. Since then large consignments have found their way to the United Kingdom, the only drawback being the want of ships to carry further cargoes. At the time of writing large stocks are held ready for shipment. The activity in this trade can not fail to make itself

perceptible in commercial undertakings, by giving an incentive to increase exports, and so re-act in swelling foreign imports. This condition must also create hopeful prospects in the shipping trade.

It is stated that the markets of the United Kingdom are now in a position to absorb the whole of the exports of palm kernels from British West Africa. It is considered that prices now ruling are sufficient to encourage output. Should these conditions continue, we may look forward to a fairly good report for 1915.

[Excerpt from British Colonial Report for Sierra Leone.]

Dependence of the Colony on the European Market.

The chief interest in the decline in the imports, exports, and revenue derived from customs duty is that it illustrates how dependent for its prosperity is a tropical country upon the prices obtainable in the European market for its products. That the depression in trade during 1914 was not primarily due to the outbreak of war and its dislocating effects is proved by the fact that the general decline set in early in the year.

While admitting that in the case of certain commodities, such as rice and gum copal, local causes were at work to cause the decrease in the quantity exported, by far the most important reason for the decline was the fall in prices paid in Europe for certain of the products of the colony. As has been stated, the decline in the output of rubber, ginger, and particularly palm kernels was due to this cause.

Coming on the top of a trade depression the war operated as an aggravating factor, though its effect has for several reasons not been so pronounced as might have been anticipated. The chief way in which it affected the colony was by closing the German markets. As in 1913 Germany was responsible for 47.49 per cent of the export trade and for only 9.95 per cent of the imports the exports were naturally more seriously impaired than the imports.

Fluctuation in Palm-Oil Trade.

Shipments of palm kernels during 1914 showed a falling off in value of $1,759,687 from 1913. This shortage can not be wholly ascribed to the war. During the seven months ended July 31 the shrinkage in value of shipments amounted to $225,411. The contraction during the earlier part of the year was due to the reduction of prices in the European market, and a consequent disinclination of the natives to part with their kernels at reduced rates.

Upon the outbreak of the war in August there was a temporary dislocation in the kernel trade, but from September onward there was a steady acceleration in the monthly output, which culminated in December. Although the price of palm oil was high during the first seven months of the year, the quantity exported was less than during a similar period in 1913. In August shipments were considerably decreased, and although the trade recovered somewhat toward the end of the year, in comparison with figures for 1913, there was a total reduction of $88,191. In addition to a fall in price after the outbreak of war, the partial failure of the first rice crop, and the attention which was in some districts diverted to the production of a second crop, both had a depressing effect upon the production of palm oil.

Information Bureau Seeks New Markets.

During 1914 reports were furnished by the Imperial Institute to the Government of Sierra Leone on the results of the investigation in the Scientific and Technical Research Department of seven samples of soil from the experimental farm at Jala. The samples included soils from the cocoa and kola plantations, from plats on which rice and groundnuts had been grown, and from the bush land. The soils were in most cases found to be deficient in lime and phosphoric acid, and recommendations were accordingly made as to suitable manurial treatment for improving them in this respect.

During the same year a special technical information bureau was formed at the Imperial Institute for the purpose of dealing with the steadily increasing stream of technical and commercial inquiries which have been received in recent years from manufacturers, merchants, and others in the United Kingdom and the Colonies. These inquiries relate principally to new sources of supply of raw material, methods of utilizing new products from the Colonies and India, or to new or little known processes and machinery for industrial purposes. On the outbreak of war the number of such inquiries was largely increased and the work of the bureau in finding markets for colonial products assumed very considerable importance. A number of products from British Colonies had been almost exclusively utilized in Germany, and on the suspension of trade with that country it was necessary to find fresh markets for the material.

Effect of New System of Instruction.

It is premature to expect great changes from the new system of education instituted in 1911, but on the whole instruction proceeds on more intelligent lines and the wholesale use of mechanical methods is dying out, even in the rural districts. In the urban schools a higher standard of intelligence has been reached and maintained. The children speak and write correct and simple English and arithmetic is taught on a practical basis.

The school curriculum of the Government Model School includes hand and eye work, hygiene, and sanitation, singing, drill, and nature study; in connection with the last-mentioned subject there is a school museum. In the two industrial schools in the colony instruction is given in definite trades, such as carpentry, smith's work, baking, farming, and elementary engineering. There is a great demand for boys trained in this school. The diocesan technical school gives instruction in the sciences relating to the building trade, architecture, and surveying, including trigonometrical methods of mensuration. The practical nature of the training is of a valuable and useful kind, and the results more than justify the existence of this institution.

United Kingdom to Utilize Raw Material—Forestry.

With this object in view, the Technical Information Bureau issued a series of circulars and press notices, which were widely distributed, dealing with products of this class, and as a result satisfactory arrangements were made for the utilization in the United Kingdom of certain raw material which had not previously been worked there to any extent. Successful action of this kind has been taken with regard to palm kernels, which are the most important articles of

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commerce in Sierra Leone. As stated above, these kernels have heretofore been exported chiefly to Germany, and that they are now being treated on a large scale by oil-seed crushers in the United Kingdom is almost wholly due to information on the subject provided by the Imperial Institute.

The most important development during the year under review was the constitution of a forest reservation extending over an area of nearly 6,000 acres and comprising the gum copal forests, which are situated on the Kassewe Hills. The trees have been greatly overtapped, but it is anticipated that a complete rest of five or more years will restore them to a healthy condition. The formation of forest reservations is of great importance as a factor calculated to counteract an increasing tendency on the part of the natives in their search for farm land to destroy the rain forest upon which this colony is chiefly dependent for its wealth.

Educational Facilities in Sierra Leone.

Education is carried on in the colony by means of elementary mission schools, the government model school, the industrial or trade schools, secondary schools, government Mohammedan elementary schools, the diocesan technical school, and the Fourah Bay College, which is affiliated with the University of Durham. The elementary schools derive their revenue from government grants, school fees, society grants, and voluntary contributions. Reading, writing, arithmetic, and hand and eye work are compulsory subjects in the assisted schools. The last mentioned subject is, however, not allowed on the curriculum until teachers have obtained the necessary qualifications. In addition to the above subjects, a good deal of practical work has been introduced, which has had a marked effect on the tone and progress of the schools.

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